

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HONG K 03719 012348Z
ACTION EA-09

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R 010802Z APR 77
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4350
INFO USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 3719

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: ETRD, CH, US
SUBJECT: CONSULATE GENERAL REPRESENTATION AT CANTON TRADE FAIRS

1. IN THE PRESENT, MORE PRAGMATIC AND TRADE-ORIENTED
ATMOSPHERE IN CHINA, THE CONGEN WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST A NEW
APPROACH TO THE QUESTION OF OUR ATTENDANCE AT THE CANTON
TRADE FAIR. AS DEPARTMENT AND USLO ARE AWARE, PEKING
HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT ACTIVE PARTICIPATION BY CONGEN
OFFICIALS IS NOT WELCOMED AND THAT USG FACILITATIVE
SERVICES SHOULD BE PERFORMED BY USLO. NEVERTHELESS,
GIVEN THE IMPROVED ATMOSPHERE IN OUR RELATIONS WITH PRC
REPRESENTATIVES IN HONG KONG, WE CONSIDER IT POSSIBLE
THAT THE CHINESE MIGHT BE MORE RECEPTIVE TO A PROPOSAL
FOR A BRIEF OBSERVATION VISIT BY CONGEN OFFICIALS DIRECTLY
INVOLVED IN US/PRC TRADE.

2. IN HONG KONG, THE PRC HAS TAKEN A NUMBER OF NEW STEPS
RECENTLY THAT APPEAR TO REFLECT A MORE ACTIVE USE OF
HONG KONG ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR EARNING FOREIGN EXCHANGE.
THIS NEW FLEXIBILITY HAS EVEN EXTENDED TO COOPERATING WITH
THE CONSULATE ON LOCAL TRADE PROMOTION EFFORTS, SUCH AS THE
RECENT PITCH BY A PRC-CONTROLLED NEWSPAPER TO SELL
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ADVERTISING SPACE FOR A USG-SPONSORED EXHIBITION OF
BUSINESS MACHINES.

3. WHILE ALL OF THIS MAY NOT BE DIRECTLY RELATED TO
THE QUESTION OF CONGEN REPRESENTATION AT THE FAIR,
IT SUGGESTS A MORE RELAXED ATMOSPHERE THAT WE MIGHT BE
ABLE TO EXPLOIT FOR OUR OWN ADVANTAGE. WE HAVE, FOR

EXAMPLE, NOTICED A GREATER WILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF PRC TRADE AND PRESS REPRESENTATIVES TO HAVE MORE EXTENSIVE ASSOCIATION WITH CONGENOFFS THAN IN THE PAST. MORE SPECIFICALLY, ON TWO SEPARATE OCCASIONS RECENTLY SENIOR LOCAL PRC CADRE HAVE ASKED CONGENOFFS WHETHER WE INTENDED TO GO TO THIS SPRING'S TRADE FAIR. ADMITTEDLY LOCAL OFFICIALS, EVEN IN SENIOR POSITIONS, MAY NOT BE AWARE OF THE PREVIOUS PRC POSITION ON THIS QUESTION, BUT IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE TO MISS A SIGNAL SIMPLY THROUGH INACTION.

4. WE WOULD THEREFORE PROPOSE THAT THE DEPARTMENT APPROACH PRCLO WITH A REQUEST THAT TWO CONGEN OFFICERS BE PERMITTED TO VISIT THE SPRING FAIR FOR A WEEK AS OBSERVERS. THIS IS A VARIATION FROM PREVIOUS OCCASIONS WHEN WE HAVE SOUGHT OFFICIAL "WORKING REPRESENTATION." THE JUSTIFICATION WOULD BE THAT THIS FAMILIARIZATION TRIP WOULD HELP CONSULATE OFFICERS PROVIDE MORE IDN VLGAUI SSISTANCE TO US BUSINESSMEN IN HONG KONG SEEKING GUIDANCE ABOUT THE FAIR. THE OFFICERS WE HAVE IN MIND FOR THE INITIAL VISIT ARE FSO-2 HAROLD VOORHEES, HEAD OF THE ECONOMIC-COMMERCIAL SECTION, AND FSO-4 SCOTT HALLFORD, HEAD OF THE CHINA REPORTING SECTION'S ECONOMIC UNIT. VOORHEES' CURRENT DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT CONTAINS A TAIWAN VISA, SO A NEW ONE WOULD HAVE TO BE ISSUED IN TIME TO USE BEFORE THE CLOSE OF THE FAIR MAY 15.

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